

mestication; the pheasant will ally with the cock; the last with the turkey, with which the hoccas born in the domestic state will also unite. It appears, in fact, very possible to produce mongrels from the major part of those *Gallinæ* which are susceptible of domestication*.”

The latter remark receives strong corroboration from the facts we have adduced in this paper; and we believe that a hybrid progeny between the guinea fowl and common fowl is now for the first time made known to naturalists. The fact derives its peculiar interest from the remoteness of the genera which have thus produced an intermediate variety.—*Ibid.*

On the Habits of the Honey Buzzard in Confinement.

By GORDON JOS. FORSTER, Esq.

The Honey Buzzard now in my possession was wounded in the wing, and taken about three months ago. It was at first confined in a small garden-house, and for a day or two refused to eat anything, but at last began to feed upon small birds, but would not touch raw flesh or any kind of offal, nor has it yet done so, although it has not the smallest objection to a rat or a frog. Many birds of prey, after eating the muscular parts of any animal or bird, leave the entrails untouched; the Honey Buzzard, on the contrary, generally begins by opening the carcass, and then devouring everything it finds within it. It is very fond of the honeycomb of the wild bee, and when hungry will swallow large pieces of the comb containing the grub or larvæ, but when its appetite is not very keen it usually separates the cells, extracts the grub, and throws the wax away. There has been little honey in the combs this year, but when perchance any has dropt from the cells upon the ground, I have seen the bird repeatedly thrust its bill into the earth, where it appeared to be moistened by the honey. Unless very hungry it will not attempt to tear open a large bird, but is exceedingly fond of a fresh herring. There is something capricious in the appetite of birds, as well as in that of the human race. I had an eider duck for three years, and during that time it never could be prevailed upon to taste shell-fish; its favourite food was barley bread, though if grain of any kind was thrown down to it, it would devour it in the same manner and with the same rapidity as the common duck. Of all the birds of prey with which I am acquainted, the Honey Buzzard is apparently the gentlest, the kindest, and the most capable of attachment; it seems to possess little of the fierceness of that warlike tribe. It will follow me round the garden, cowering and shaking its wings, though not soliciting food, uttering at the same time a plaintive sound, something like the whistle of the golden plover, but softer and much more prolonged. Though shy with strangers, it is very fond of being noticed and caressed by those to whose presence it has been accustomed. In the same garden there are three lap-

* Griffith's Cuvier, viii. pp. 173, 175, 176. Prichard, Researches into the Physical History of Mankind, i. p. 140, 3rd ed.

wings, a blue-backed gull, and a curlew. The plovers are often seen with the buzzard sitting in the midst of them, showing no signs of caution or apprehension, but seem as if they were listening to a lecture delivered by him. The gull frequently retires into the garden-house, probably to enjoy the society of the buzzard. The garden is not the garden of Eden, and yet these birds, of different natures, habits and dispositions, appear to live in perfect harmony, peace and good fellowship with each other.

G. J. F.

Newton-by-the-Sea, Aug. 29, 1845.

P.S.—I have had three living specimens of the Honey Buzzard in my possession, not one of them in plumage at all resembling the other. One of the three never could be induced to take any food, and after living about a fortnight, died, I believe, from pure inanition. Besides the plaintive cry above-mentioned, the Honey Buzzard has another and more varied note apparently of alarm.—*From the Transactions of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club*, vol. ii. p. 173.

LARUS EBURNEUS.

On Monday last Michael Roberts of Penzance, who devotes a considerable portion of his time and attention to the subject of ornithology, succeeded in shooting, off the pier head, a very excellent specimen of the ivory gull (*Larus eburneus*). We believe that the first specimen of this species obtained in the United Kingdom was at Balta Sound, Shetland Islands, in the winter of 1822. The length of these birds varies from 16 to 18 inches, depending upon age and sex. Captains Sabine and J. C. Ross represent this species as common on the coast of Greenland, Davis' Straits, Baffin's Bay, Port Bowen and Hecla Cove. Dr. Richardson mentions these birds as having been seen breeding in great numbers in the high perforated cliffs which form the extremity of Cape Parry, in lat. 70°.—*Cornwall Royal Gazette*.

FOSSIL HUMAN BONES.

At a Meeting of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia (Oct. 6, 1846), Dr. Dickeson exhibited a large and remarkably varied series of fossil bones, obtained by him from the vicinity of Natchez, Miss. The collection embraces the entire head and half of the lower jaw of the *Megalonyx Jeffersoni**, now for the first time discovered; together with many parts of the skeleton, and indeed of several skeletons of that animal, sufficient to enable its complete osteological reconstruction. The stratum that contains these organic remains is a tenacious blue clay that underlies the diluvial drift east of Natchez, and which diluvial deposit abounds in bones and teeth of the *Mastodon giganteum*.

* Dr. Dickeson originally suggested, from partial comparisons, that this cranium belonged to the *Megalonyx*, and not to the *Myloodon* as others had supposed; his opinion was fully confirmed by M. Agassiz on a recent examination; and this distinguished naturalist has proved the *Megalonyx laqueatus* of Harlan to belong, not to *Megalonyx*, but to some other nearly allied genus.